



Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and
District Historical Society

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The Prime Minister's Daughter Declares her Love for the "notorious" Lord Bury: Cobourg, October 1855.

In October 1855 Lord Bury, the Canadian Superintendent of Indian Affairs, stood accused in the Canadian press of scandalous behaviour with a "loose" woman. Sophia MacNab believed him innocent, and acted on her belief. MacNab, the pre-Confederation prime minister's daughter, risked her reputation by leaning on his arm while walking beside him across the Cobourg Fair Grounds. Their marriage one month later ended the scandal. In his talk for the Citizen's Forum, Victoria Hall, Don Smith, Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Calgary, examines Cobourg's role in the resolution of the "affaire Bury." Of special interest: Bury and Sophia MacNab's great-great-granddaughter Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, is married to Prince Charles, great-great-grandson of King Edward VII. In September 1860 the future King Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, opened Cobourg's Victoria Hall during his Royal Tour of British North America, 150 years ago this fall.

Donald B. Smith will present the details of this fascinating story at our September 28, 2010 meeting in Victoria Hall. Smith has written extensively on Natives and history. His most recognized work with a local connection is the biography, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter*

Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians. He co-edited *Aboriginal Ontario* with the late Edward S. Rogers. He is currently writing *Mississauga Portraits*, a study of eight First Nations people in mid- and late-19th century Ontario.

Doors open at 7:30 p.m. and the meeting starts at 8:00 p.m.

Everyone is welcome!

Our next two meetings:

Oct 28, 2010	Commander Antony Pitts [ret'd] and Lieutenant Commander Ken Scott [ret'd]	Anchors Aweigh: The Renaissance of Canada's Naval Service
Nov 23, 2010	Jean Murray Cole	Sandford Fleming – Beginnings: Getting Established in Canada

Henley Arcade: The Rest of the Story

by Judith Goulin

The King Street walkway that many people pass through on their way from the Covert Street parking lot has a long history. It was not always the handy shortcut that it is now. Early records indicate that this space was occupied by a shop called J. S. Bowen's Variety Store and Barber Shop. Later it was home to a different type of business---John Henley Shoe Repair.



John Henley, who grew up in Surrey, England, was orphaned when his parents both died of influenza. Along with his brothers, Henley was taken to the School of Hand Crafts, a place designed to provide practical training and general education for young men. Here John learned the trade of shoe repair.

John immigrated to Canada and in time opened his small shoe repair shop on the south side of King Street, but later moved his business to the north side, opposite Second Street. This shop was one of several businesses located at street level in the still existing three-storey Flemish bond brick building.

Mr. Henley is remembered as a good person: a quiet, kind, friendly white-haired man, soft-spoken, with a great sense of humour besides. A true craftsman, it was said that he could repair any shoes.

1798—We were not here

2798—We will not be here

1948—We are here on the sunny side
of King Street

John Henley Shoe Repair was typical of a genre of shops that many will remember. It was long and narrow with large storefront windows and wood paneling at the bottom. It was heated by a Quebec heater that looks somewhat like a pot-bellied stove. In time, John had fewer and fewer shoes to fix, so he branched out into bicycle repair, changing the name of his business to John Henley Shoe Repairs and Bicycles.

JOHN HENLEY

Shoe Repairs and Bicycles

A fire that started in the Quebec heater destroyed Henley's shop one night in 1972. It was John's 46th year in business.

A municipal parking lot north of King Street had been approved in 1968, but final plans were still pending. Something good came out of the Henley tragedy when the town of Cobourg acquired the burnt-out premises and the idea was born to create a convenient mid-block walkway from Covert to King utilizing the former business space.

In this much-beloved man's honour, John Henley's name is immortalized in the name of this thoroughfare: Henley Arcade.

This article is based on a personal interview with Fred Cory (a grandson of John Henley) and material gleaned from the Cobourg Star, Cobourg Sentinel Star, LACAC Inventory of Cobourg's Century Buildings, The Life and Times of a Community Publisher by Frank Meharry Russell and Cobourg Early Days and Modern Times by John R. Spilsbury.

Sales of the Cox Watercolour Sketches

In recent years we were fortunate to acquire a portfolio of 16 original watercolour sketches depicting scenes of early Cobourg, painted in the 1890s by a resident, Mrs. Cox. Two of these Cox watercolours have been reproduced and were introduced to the Society members at our meetings last spring.

Producing prints of the original watercolours and making them available for sale is a fundraising initiative to benefit our Society. The prints are attractively matted with the size of standard 11x14-inch off-the-shelf frames in mind. They are packaged for retail sale, and each print includes information describing the subject matter. Despite their appealing attributes, sales of the prints so far have been disappointing.

We ask our members to remember that these historical Cobourg scenes make attractive and unique gifts, especially for newlyweds, visitors, those newly arrived in the community, or old

friends moving away. They are available for purchase at the Burnham Family Farm Market on Hwy 2, With All My Art at 26 King St. W., the Painted Tree at 264 Division St., the Art Gallery of Northumberland in Victoria Hall and Reg Ward Insurance at 409 Division St. The prints also are available through the CDHS Archives at the C. Gordon King Centre. The prints are priced at \$30.00 each, or \$55.00 for the pair. Please keep the Cox watercolours in mind the next time you are looking for a distinctive and special gift.

CDHS Executive for 2010 – 2011

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This summer was an unusually busy one for the CDHS Executive.

- Martha Watson setup a booth at the Waterfront Festival with brochures from the Society and a display of our historic Cox prints that are for sale. Some were sold!
- Judith Goulin and her programme committee worked on speakers for our general meetings in 2010 and 2011. The schedule is nearly complete and once again excellent speakers have been obtained.
- The entire Executive had a special meeting in August to accept the recommendation to obtain a part-time bookkeeper. Jan Doucette, a registered CPA, was unanimously approved for the position. She has extensive experience helping small businesses. We look forward to having her experience to aid us in dealing with our ever increasing tasks and the continuing changes in government regulations. With a full-time archivist (Ciara Ward) and being the official archives for the town of Cobourg and Northumberland County we are running a very busy and important public service.
- Cath Oberholzer and Ciara Ward prepared a proposal for an Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant which was accepted. The Ontario Trillium Foundation had a recognition event with us to present a grant of over \$20,000 to prepare an oral history of our local veterans. This project will last for two years and will be under the leadership of Ciara. She will coordinate local high school students in interviewing the veterans. More details will follow.

Notes and Notices

Websites

There are several websites with great Cobourg-related historical material. Everyone should visit, www.cdhsarchives.org, www.hardscrabble.ca and www.cobourghistory.ca. These sites are frequently updated with new material so visit them often.

Historical Review

The Historical Review 27, a compilation of the Cobourg and District Historical Society presentations for 2009-2010, will be available at the September 28th meeting. A copy is included as part of your 2009 membership dues.

Cobourg Library and Archives Anniversary

On Saturday, September 18 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., the Cobourg Public Library together with the Cobourg and District Historical Society Archives will celebrate 15 years in the C. Gordon King Centre. Visit the King Centre at 200 Ontario Street to find out more about the available services and maybe even win a prize! Children are welcome.

Cemetery Walk

On Saturday, October 2, St. there will be a guided walk about St. Peter's Heritage Cemetery under the leadership of Rob Mikel. The walk is open to all who are interested. A voluntary donation towards the upkeep of the cemetery will be appreciated.

The cemetery is just south of Elgin at the corner of Ontario and Huycke Streets. The entrance is on Huycke Street. Participants should gather in front of the chapel inside the main gates prior to the 1:30pm start of the walk.

Lakeshore Genealogical Society

The October meeting will be in the C. Gordon King Centre at 200 Ontario Street at 6:30 p.m. on October 14.